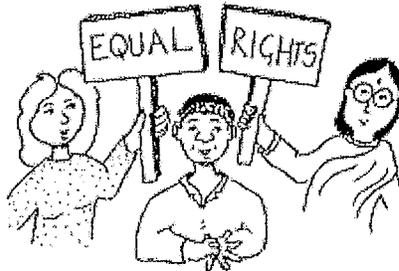


## CHAPTER 10

# Equal Rights



Today everyone seems to be demanding their rights! We constantly hear cries such as these: **"I am not being treated fairly!" "I am not getting what I deserve!" "I am the victim of discrimination!" "I want the same rights and privileges and opportunities as those people have!"**

There are times when a person must stand up for his rights. Did the Apostle Paul claim his rights and privileges as a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29)? \_\_\_\_\_ Did a mother in Solomon's day claim her right to have her own child (1 Kings 3:16-28)? \_\_\_\_\_ Did Daniel claim his right to pray to his God (Daniel 6:4-13)? \_\_\_\_\_ Even the Declaration of Independence mentions certain ***unalienable rights*** (rights which belong to us and which must not be taken from us) such as Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. The original purpose of our government was to secure and protect these basic rights.

There are other times when people must be careful not to demand rights which are not legitimate or to demand rights to which they are not entitled. Suppose you were to enter a bank and say, "I'm lacking money at this present time and I feel I have a right to possess enough money to purchase the things I need and want. Therefore I now claim my rights and demand that you hand over \$5,000." Of course, the bank would have the right to call the police and have you arrested!

When someone demands certain rights which he is not entitled to, this results in bondage and not freedom. Freedom does not mean doing what we want to do. Let's take the illustration of a freeway. Cars can move at high speed without interruption because there are laws, and our freedom to move is dependent upon the obedience of everybody there. If we were free to move in any direction, at any speed, in any lane, there wouldn't be freedom for anybody. It would not be a freeway! True liberty comes from obeying the law--whether man's laws (such as on the highway) or God's laws (as found in the Bible). "And ye shall know the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ shall make you \_\_\_\_\_" (John 8:32).

Let us now consider some of the various groups of people who are demanding their rights today.

### Workers' Rights

**"We need higher wages!" "If our salaries are not increased we will go on strike!" "We must have better benefits and a generous retirement plan!" "We are not making enough to**

**support our families!" "We want a three-day work week and a four-day weekend!" "We should have a coffee break every half hour!" "We need to work less and earn more!" "The minimum wage should be \$100.00 an hour!"**

Did John the Baptist tell the soldiers to go on strike until their salary was increased (Luke 3:14)?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ What should a Christian be content with (Hebrews 13:5)?

\_\_\_\_\_ What two things are necessary to have in this life (1 Timothy 6:8)? 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Will the Lord provide these things for His children (Matthew 6:25-34)? \_\_\_\_\_ What great sin means the opposite of **contentment** and starts with the same letter (Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:3)? \_\_\_\_\_ (This word means "the desire to have more, and more and more!")

The Bible has much to say about the master and slave (servant) relationship which can be applied to the employer and employee or the boss and worker relationship today. What is the duty of the employee (worker) towards his employer (boss) according to Colossians 3:22 (circle the correct answer)?

- a. to complain
- b. to demand his rights
- c. to obey in all things (unless his boss tells him to disobey God)
- d. to go on strike
- e. to ask for more money

God has given the employee the right to obey his employer and the right to work hard (Colossians 3:23), being content with his wages (Luke 3:14). Happy is the worker who claims this right!

### Minority Rights

**"I should get this job because my skin is green, and every company should hire a certain number of green-skinned people!" "I should be elected as governor because I am a woman and this state has never had a woman governor!" "I should play on this professional baseball team because I'm an Eskimo and there are not any Eskimos on this team!"**

Today the government has a policy called *affirmative action* which means that people are often hired on the basis of race, nationality and sex rather than intelligence and ability to do the job. As a result many companies are forced to employ less-skilled and less-qualified workers. Suppose twenty people (eight Whites, three Blacks, four Indians, two Chinese, and three Italians) all applied for work at a company which had only five openings. Let's assume that only the Blacks and the Chinese applicants were really qualified and able to do the job. Let's also assume that the company had a regulation which said that at least one person from each race or nationality must be hired. How many unqualified workers would this company hire? \_\_\_\_\_ Suppose ten men and ten women were to apply for six job openings as secretaries at an insurance company which has a rule that an equal number of men and women must be hired. Let's assume that none of the men have secretarial skills but all of the women are highly qualified. How many unqualified people would get the job? \_\_\_\_\_

Apparently the Lord Jesus Christ did not believe in *affirmative action*. When He called His 12 disciples (Luke 6:13-16), not one woman was chosen. Also, only one nationality was represented

(they were all Jews). Not one Gentile or Samaritan was selected! Almost all of the disciples were from the same region (Galilee) and the majority of them were fishermen. No Pharisee was included in the group and none of the twelve were Sadducees. Basically they all had the same color skin. Was the Lord guilty of discrimination? Perish the thought!

If a person wants to work for the Lord, he must be qualified. God hires people, not on the basis of color, nationality or sex, but on the basis of whether the person is qualified. God does not allow anyone to serve Him unless that person is saved, sanctified (set apart), submissive and surrendered! But if these qualifications are met, it does not matter if the person is male or female, black or white, Italian or Spanish. God is not a R\_\_\_\_\_ of P\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 10:34).

**God gives every person the right to serve Him** (assuming they meet the qualifications)! Happy is the person who claims this right!

### Women's Rights



**"I feel enslaved by all my domestic duties (cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning, etc.)--let me get out of this house!" "I want equal employment opportunities--I deserve the same kind of jobs men are getting!" "For a woman to be just a housewife seems unfair. I want my husband to take care of the children as much as I do." "I demand equal pay for equal work--if I hold the same position as a certain man, then I should get the same pay he gets." "I want the right to be ordained into the ministry and to be a pastor." "I demand my rights to have an abortion." "I'm a good ballplayer, so there is no reason why I should not play on this all-male team!" "Women should have the same kind of jobs that men have, including holding public office, being President of the United States, being a military general, or anything else we want to do, etc."**

Some of these demands are reasonable; others are not. It is not unreasonable for a woman to get well paid for a job well done. It is not unreasonable for a women to serve on a school board or hold some other important job as long as her family is not neglected. Women can and should contribute to our society in many important ways.

God in His wisdom created man ("man" is used here as a generic term referring to both the man and the woman), and He created them \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 1:27). To each He gave different roles and responsibilities. The man was to handle **foreign policy** and the woman was to take charge of **domestic policy**. That is, the man would be responsible for defense, diplomacy and foreign exchange--for providing and supplying and defending the household. The woman would be responsible for managing the household so that it would be

worth defending and supplying. Together they complement each other and make a great team! In Proverbs 31:10-31 we have a description of a virtuous or godly woman. Is there anything in these verses that speak of her **domestic** responsibilities (relating to her household and her children, etc.)?

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What responsibilities do women have according to Titus 2:3-5?

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According to the Bible, who should go to war, males or females (Numbers 1:2-3, 20, 22, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_ A man should be willing even to give his own life for his wife or children or country if necessary (compare Ephesians 5:25 and John 15:13). Today in our society women are allowed to serve in the military in various capacities, but when there is combat on the battlefield, it is the men who should be involved.

Does the Bible allow women to be preachers and pastors (1 Timothy 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35)? \_\_\_\_\_ Today more and more churches are disregarding and disobeying what God has said in these passages, and they are allowing women to be pastors and preachers. This is not a healthy, God-honoring trend.

**God has given women the right to submit to their husbands, to love their children, to be keepers at home and to look well to the ways of their households.** Happy is the wife and mother who claims these rights! [Note: This does not mean that women are forbidden to be involved in business ventures. See Proverbs 31:16,18,24 and Acts 16:14 where Lydia was a seller of purple dye.]

### Children's Rights



**"I want the government to protect me from my parents, especially from terrible child abuse, such as spanking or taking away my television or internet privileges!" "I demand the right to sue my parents!" "I want to be liberated from all parental authority!" "I want to be able to choose my own parents, and if I don't like the ones who gave me birth, then I should have the right to 'divorce' them and find some better parents." "There should be a minimum wage allowance of \$25.00 an hour for household chores!" "I want to move to Sweden where spanking is outlawed and where children really have rights!"**

According to Ephesians 6:1-2, what are a child's two basic duties towards his parents? 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ **God has given each child the right to obey his parents in all things and to honor them with all due**

**respect.** Happy is the boy or girl or teen who claims this right!

## Gay Rights



**"I have a right to be homosexual. Just like you cannot change the color of your skin or the color of your eyes, so I cannot change who I am." "We homosexuals do not want to be discriminated against, but we want you all to recognize that our lifestyle is legitimate!" "I demand the right to be a member of any church I choose and to eventually be ordained as a pastor!" "Homosexual couples should have the right to be married just like anyone else." "No one should condemn us for what we do."**

A careful examination of the political, economic, and social issues relating to homosexuality is obviously beyond the scope of this chapter. However, two points should be noted:

(1) Those who are gay make up a small minority in America. Estimates range from 2-4% of the population, or perhaps a little higher. Yet, many gay activists are demanding that everyone approve of and promote their agenda. This position becomes an infringement on the rights of others.

As an example, when Barack Obama was President, he announced in December, 2011 that the promotion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) behavior was a top foreign policy priority. A temporary ambassador to El Salvador published an essay in which she equated disapproval of homosexuality with "brutal hostility" and "aggression" by "those who promote hatred" and said it was Salvadorians' responsibility to become advocates for LGBT issues.

More than three dozen leaders in Latin American countries reacted strongly against these statements. A major Washington, DC newspaper, *The Washington Times*, published a strong letter from Latin American leaders, who said the Obama administration "is demeaning our culture and insulting our values." These leaders wrote, "We support the legitimate human rights of all our citizens. We do not support made up 'homosexual rights.' We do not appreciate the ambassador from another country coming in and preaching to us. We intend to defend our moral values and preserve our families."

(2) The homosexual lifestyle often has very negative medical and quality of life consequences. The AIDS rate for gay men is reported to be many times higher than it is in the rest of the population. There are millions of children and orphans with HIV/AIDS who are affected by this

lifestyle choice. This is one example of a lifestyle choice adversely affecting the health and well being of millions of people.

As we now look at the spiritual aspects of gay rights, we can think back on one of the darkest times of Israelite history, the period of the Judges. At that time "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Depraved men were setting the **standard** and determining what was right. Something may seem right in man's eyes, but the key question is this: **Is it right in God's eyes?** Men greatly err when it comes to recognizing and following a right course of action: "There is a way which **seemeth** right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

When man sets the **standard** then anything goes. Sinful men can justify anything as they reject and willfully ignore God's standards as clearly revealed in God's Word. Men and women of our day are busy doing what is right in their own eyes.

The real issue is this: Do we have the right to decide what is right or wrong, or does God have this right? Do we have the right to define what a marriage is, or should we follow God's definition? God has not given us the right to violate and disobey His Word. Men and women can choose to reject God's Word, but there will be serious consequences for making such a choice. God has not given us the right to redefine marriage and to make it something different from what God says it is.

According to God's definition of marriage, was marriage between a man and a woman or was marriage also between a man and a man? (The answer is found in Genesis chapter 2.)

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When God established the first marriage in Genesis chapter 2, did God bring Eve to Adam or did God bring Steve to Adam?

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Under the law of Moses, did God approve of homosexuality or did God forbid it (Leviticus 18:22)?

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Under the law of Moses, what was the penalty for a person committing a homosexual act (Leviticus 20:13)?

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Homosexuality is contrary to God's original plan for a man and woman. It is a serious deviation from what God originally designed and established for the good of mankind. Throughout the Bible marriage is consistently defined as a union between a man and a woman. Indeed, God's definition of marriage was recognized by most societies for thousands of years. It is only in recent times that people have rejected God's definition of marriage, and have broadened the definition to include homosexual unions. But again, man does not the right to redefine marriage.

According to Romans 1:24-27, why do people engage in homosexual activities? It all begins with a **rejection of the Creator**: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead [deity]; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, **they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:20-21).

The great error and sin of these people was twofold: (1) They did not honor God for **Who He was**; (2) They did not thank God for **what He had done**. They rejected **His Person** and **His work**. As a result God **gave them up** to their own hearts' lust. They **abandoned** God and therefore God **abandoned** them and **gave them up** to the horrible sins mentioned in verses 24-32. The result was not evolution and progress but degeneration and regression. They became

**fools** (verse 22). Homosexuality, according to Romans 1, is the predictable result of a society that fails to honor God and recognize His truth (verses 18, 21).

Consider the list of sinners mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Notice that homosexuals are grouped together with the following: "the ungodly," "murderers of fathers," "murderers of mothers," "manslayers," "fornicators," "kidnappers," etc. If homosexuality were really a legitimate, alternate lifestyle in God's sight, then we would not expect homosexuals to be listed together with the worst kind of sinners imaginable. What is even more fascinating is that Paul groups himself with these sinners in verse 15. He says, of all the sinners, "**I am chief** (first)." Picture, if you would, the sinners listed in verses 9-10 forming a parade and marching down the city street. Marching in this parade are murderers, kidnappers, homosexuals, liars, etc. In verse 15 Paul was saying, "I want you to know that I was at the head of that parade. I am the **chief sinner**, because I persecuted the church of God." Why was Paul's sin so great? Because he attacked Jesus Christ by attacking Christ's body (see Acts 9:4--"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?").

Thus in this passage we find great **hope** for homosexuals. Paul was saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Paul was saying, "If He could save me, the **chief sinner**, then He can certainly save a homosexual or a murderer or a kidnapper or an ungodly person." "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting (1 Timothy 1:16). The **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ is far **greater** than the **sin** of homosexuality. Has the grace of God conquered your heart?

In 1 Corinthians 6:9 we are told that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. That is, they will be excluded from God's kingdom. These unrighteous ones include fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, and homosexuals (those described as "effeminate" and as "abusers of themselves with mankind"—"men who practice homosexuality"-ESV). In verse 11 we find some wonderful good news for sinful men. Paul says, "And such were some of you." Some of the Corinthians used to be fornicators. Some would go to the temple in the city of Corinth where there were many prostitutes. Fornication was part of their pagan religious practices. Some of the Corinthians used to be idolaters and adulterers and homosexuals, but God did a wonderful thing! God saved them from their life of sin: "...but ye are W \_\_\_\_\_ (cleansed from all their sin), but ye are S \_\_\_\_\_ (set apart for the service of the living God), but ye are J \_\_\_\_\_ (declared righteous in Christ) in the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Some of the Corinthians used to be homosexuals, but God saved them and changed them!

There is great hope and help for homosexuals. God can save them and change them. Some homosexuals think this way: "I was born a homosexual and I cannot change this." It is true that some people are more prone to homosexual behavior than are others. Some may be sexually tempted in other directions. Fornication and adultery are certainly just as serious in God's sight as engaging in homosexual activity. Just as fornication and adultery are sexual activities that people choose to engage in, so also homosexuality is a chosen pattern of living which can be changed and cured. The living God can bring about such a change.

Homosexuals do have rights. God has given every homosexual the right to repent of his sins and the right to come to the Saviour to receive forgiveness and cleansing and the new life that is found only in Christ (1 Cor. 6:11). How happy is the homosexual who claims this right and who allows the living God to transform a sinner into a saint! And remember, homosexuals are not the only ones who need this transformation. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:23) and we all need this Saviour (1 Tim. 1:15)! We do not all struggle with the sin of homosexuality, but each of us

struggles with his own sins, and the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross to save and deliver each one of us. We are all great sinners, but we have an even greater Saviour!

### Mankind's Rights

All men have been given the right to have a Saviour, because the Bible says that the living God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Timothy 4:10). Though God is willing to save \_\_\_\_\_ men (1 Timothy 2:4), He **actually** saves only those who \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Timothy 4:10).

**God has given to every man the right and privilege and opportunity to know Him and believe on Him and have His very best!**

Happy is the man or woman, boy or girl who claims this right! God has also given people the right to **reject** the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:18; 3:36). God does not force men to come to the Saviour! He has given men the right to remain in their sins (John 8:24)! God is very discriminating when it comes to heaven. **No unbelievers are allowed** (Revelation 21:8)!

### God's Rights

Very little is said today about God's rights. Does not the Creator have some rights? Does He not have the right to be heard? Does He not have the right to be believed? Does He not have the right to be honored and worshipped? Does He not have the right to be the Sovereign Ruler over our lives? Does He not have the right to tell us what to do and how to live? **Happy is the man or woman, boy or girl who lets God have the right and freedom to simply be God in his or her life!**

